

CHAPTER 2

Curriculum restructuring in context: 1994–2007

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Since the mid-1990s, university-based teacher education in South Africa has undergone complex processes of state-mandated institutional restructuring. These external dynamics are intertwined with the processes of internally driven restructuring, as higher education systems globally respond to new imperatives. One of the most significant changes in line with global trends was to move teacher education into the higher education sector, with curriculum decisions decentralised to universities but strongly subject to centralised state regulation.

The international experience is that universities generally have less control over the nature and forms of teacher education, in favour of school-led and government-led processes (Furlong 2005; Phillips & Furlong 2001; Sayed 2004). In South Africa, however, university-based teacher educators now have increased opportunity and responsibility. Unlike the past, there is a new expectation that teacher educators will be strong academics, conducting research and, at the same time, developing research-led curricula to produce competent teachers capable of transforming the schooling system in South Africa.

As Parker and Adler (2005: 62) argue, within the new South African policy framework teacher educators have the potential power to 'redefine knowledge and practices for teacher education and to re-insert disciplined and disciplinary inquiry into teacher preparation programmes'. One indication that there is a new space for teacher educators is inherent in the epistemological underpinnings of the new Norms and Standards for Educators (NSE) policy framework. The NSE defines roles, applied competences and qualifications, and in so doing provides objectives and general directions that academics should interpret and develop into new qualifications and curricula designs.

However, the ability of academic teacher educators to achieve this potential is circumscribed by the challenges they face: to develop new programmes within a rapidly restructuring institutional environment and shifting policy context. Higher education in South Africa is historically differentiated and unequal, which shapes what is possible in the present for universities with distinct legacies. Likewise, academics based in institutions with varying experiences of institutional restructuring are positioned differently to mediate new policy. They face distinct challenges that vary in form and intensity. And it is apparent that the newly created institutions may face specific challenges, as academics negotiate the potentially conflicting models and approaches that inform their work.

This chapter describes the shifting policy context within which universities are mediating their new roles as teacher educators, highlighting government policy vision and directions with which institutions are expected to engage at the macro-level.

Drivers and dynamics at the macro-level

The impetus for the restructuring of initial professional education of teachers (IPET) programmes after 1994 has been driven strongly – but not solely – by macro-level processes. We have described this as a ‘double dynamic’ of intersecting higher education and education imperatives (Kruss 2008). Curriculum restructuring is shaped by ‘local’ South African responses to global changes in conceptions of knowledge and the role of higher education. This means that it is shaped simultaneously by the transformation imperatives of the national Department of Education (DoE) for a new schooling system. It is impossible to separate out the impact of one set of imperatives, but it is useful to distinguish the key changes and dynamics in relation to each, which shape the complex conditions within which individual academics in specific universities will work.

Such a periodisation of IPET curriculum restructuring relative to both shifting higher education and educational processes was developed as part of this research project. The first period, from 1994 to 1999, was one in which teacher education responded to internal restructuring dynamics within universities, more strongly shaped by higher education financial imperatives and shifting conceptions of knowledge generation. The second period, from 2000 to 2003, was more strongly shaped by national educational transformation imperatives, with the incorporation of colleges of education into the higher education system. The third period, from 2004 to 2005, was again more strongly shaped by higher education dynamics, as teacher education academics were caught up in mergers and the creation of a new institutional landscape. In the fourth period, from 2006 to the present, teacher educators are grappling with the challenges of creating new institutional homes and consolidating the system. In each of these periods, there are processes of policy formulation and implementation purporting to drive change in higher education qualifications, programmes and curricula in general, and in relation to IPET specifically. These will be analysed briefly in the following sections, to situate the analyses of five specific universities in the chapters that follow. It will become clear that any single university will have engaged cumulatively with multiple imperatives in distinct combinations over the past 10 years.

Debating new higher education curriculum policy in South Africa: 1994–1999

In the period from 1994 to 1999, curriculum change was primarily driven by the insertion of South Africa into the global community, and the need to develop new policy frameworks for a democratic future.

Global higher education dynamics

Breier (2001) gives an excellent overview of curriculum restructuring in South African higher education in relation to global trends, which provides a kind of baseline of the situation in 1999 – before institutional restructuring across the higher education landscape began.

In general, curriculum reform has lagged behind other policy changes in South Africa, particularly because of entrenched notions of academic and disciplinary autonomy. However, the effects of globalisation, Breier argues, initiated international debate around the curriculum in relation to a number of cross-cutting themes which were of particular relevance in South Africa since the deliberations of the National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE 1996). Internationally, academics were debating the

impact of globalisation, massification and internationalisation on the curriculum. Debates around the extent of responsiveness of the curriculum to the economy, the wider society or local communities were vigorous globally, and increasingly in South Africa (CHE 2002; Ensor 2001, 2002, 2004; Griesel 2004; Singh 2001). As Ogude, Nel and Oosthuizen (2005: 1) phrase it, 'In essence, higher education institutions worldwide are being called upon to become more responsive to the needs of the knowledge economy.'

An associated concern was the extent to which different forms of knowledge, such as indigenous knowledge or knowledge produced in sites of application, should be accommodated in the curriculum. With the shift to a conception of 'mode 2' knowledge, there were debates about the extent to which the curriculum should promote traditional disciplines or inter-disciplinarity or trans-disciplinarity (Jansen 2000; Kraak 2000). Other concerns were focused on the skills that graduates should offer employers (Griesel 2002; Kruss 2002); the shifting relationships between institutional autonomy, academic freedom and public accountability (CHE 2002; Habib, Bentley & Morrow 2006; Jonathan 2007); and the ideal features of a quality distance-education curriculum (Welch & Reed 2005).

Breier (2001) discusses local policy and institutional initiatives in relation to each of these global themes and influences. South African concerns are strongly shaped by the national demand for equity and redress, and are in tension with the demand for responsiveness, efficiency and effectiveness. Two national initiatives impacted strongly on curriculum restructuring in all disciplinary fields and at all levels. The first was the introduction of a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) in 1996. The second was the shift to a programme-based approach to higher education funding, which has led to the development of national and institutional planning systems.

Research on higher education curriculum change in this period highlighted the differential institutional capacity to respond to policy initiatives, associated strongly with historical advantage (Breier 2001), and the discrepancy between national-level prescriptions and implementation and practice within universities. Breier concludes that

there were indications that some universities had used the opportunities of the NQF to change, quite substantially, the structure of their curricula, as well as the process and pedagogy or to give attention to quality. Others had not got beyond the administrative procedures associated with qualification registration. (Breier 2001: 37)

South African academics and universities in general were grappling with these kinds of curriculum restructuring debates. These fundamental concerns, related to the changing nature of knowledge production and transmission, continue to shape curriculum debates around teacher education. As will become evident, they are overlaid by the dynamics and challenges of institutional restructuring, and by the specific dynamics of shifting initial teacher education policy that followed.

The imperative to transform the national education system

Much has been written on the reform of the school curriculum in South Africa since 1996, when Curriculum 2005, popularly known as 'C2005', was introduced (Jansen 1998; Jansen & Christie 1999; Taylor & Vinjevoild 1999). Harley and Wedekind (2004: 197) have provided a succinct summary of the three design features of this

new school curriculum: that it was *outcomes-based*, that it proposed an *integrated knowledge system* and that it promoted a *learner-centred pedagogy*.

The key point for our purposes is that teacher educators were now required to prepare teachers to implement a curriculum developed on epistemological and pedagogical principles that contrasted sharply with their own existing and accepted commitments and practice. Whether their own approach was characterised by a version of Fundamental Pedagogies, critical theory or social constructivism, teacher educators were required to reform their programmes in line with the NQF qualifications structure and to register qualifications with the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA). They faced the challenge of addressing the features of the new school curriculum in their own curricula and pedagogy.

Aligning teacher education curricula

Significantly, teacher education after 1994 became a national rather than a provincial competence. It became the prerogative of the minister of education to determine national policy and standards for the professional education of teachers, accreditation and curriculum frameworks.

Guidance for the transformation of teacher education curricula came in the form of a national process from 1995 to develop the NSE (1996) to replace the old criteria (see Parker 2003 for elaboration). All public providers of teacher education were to revise their programmes, subject to the approval of the Committee on Teacher Education Policy (COTEP) and the Heads of Education Departments Committee (HEDCOM), in line with a national core curriculum (Cross 1998; Cross, Loots & Fourie 1998).

The process illustrates the complexity of alignment between national educational policy processes in general and teacher education policy specifically. First COTEP produced a new norms and standards policy document, and the accompanying criteria for the recognition and evaluation of qualifications, in 1996. These were written in the language of 'outcomes' and were intended primarily to replace the diverse range of college curricula inherited from the apartheid dispensation. Once the NQF itself was operational, by September 1997, the DoE, in collaboration with the Council of Education Ministers, HEDCOM and COTEP, decided to revise the 1996 documents in order to align them with the NQF (Parker et al. 1997a, 1997b, 1998).

A new IPET policy framework: 2000–2003

The NSE: setting parameters

The legal framework for qualifications and programmes leading to the employment of teachers and the allocation of subsidy funding was set in place at this point. The process culminated in February 2000 with a revised version of the NSE (DoE 2000a), supplemented by Criteria for Recognition and Evaluation of Qualifications for Employment in Education (DoE 2000b).

A four-year Bachelor of Education (BEEd) qualification was introduced as the preferred IPET route, alongside the one-year Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) following a three-year degree. Qualifications themselves were to be developed by standards-generating bodies (SGBs) and teacher education providers, subject to the new national processes for registration and accreditation set in place through SAQA, the DoE and the Council on Higher Education (CHE). Parker (2003: 15), who was centrally involved in the national processes, emphasises that the NSE was intended as

a flexible instrument that provides a basis for the generation of qualifications and learning programmes... The NSE do not provide specific criteria, but rather a general picture on the basis of which universities and other higher education providers can design their own programmes and qualifications.

This is a critical feature of the curriculum framework, one that created opportunity and accorded great responsibility to teacher educators. It meant that there was space for multiple mediations and interpretations of the NSE 'instrument'.

The revised NSE adopted an outcomes-based approach centred on the notion of the competent teacher, defining seven roles that a teacher should be able to perform and the knowledge, skills and values that future teachers require in order to perform these roles. In addition, the NSE distinguished three interconnected kinds of 'applied competence': practical, foundational and reflexive. The ability to integrate the discrete competences of each of the seven roles of educators was critical in the assessment of future teachers. An important point to note from the outset is the integrative intent of the NSE; that is, teacher educators would interpret the roles as aspects of a whole, rather than as seven individual functions that had to be taught and assessed separately. Moreover, each curriculum would emphasise the seven roles in different ways, depending on the target student audience, the context, the phase of schooling and the mode of delivery.

An atomistic outcomes-based approach that interprets each of the seven roles as discrete and as determining curriculum is not in line with the intended policy approach. The NSE emphasised that the purpose of the whole qualification should inform its design, integrating the units and competences of which it is composed. In particular, foundational subject knowledge was emphasised as core and linked strongly to academic disciplines, but could only be assessed as applied to the integrated practice of teaching. In essence, the new curriculum framework implied that 'institutions must ensure that teachers can teach and assess their subject content adequately within the contexts in which they teach' (Welch & Gultig 2002: 21).

As Welch and Gultig (2002) show, the revised NSE intended to align teacher education frameworks with broader educational debates about outcomes and competences, and with the new NQE. However, the process of policy formulation was dominated by a group of academics from two English-speaking, well-established universities with a shared epistemological and conceptual framework – the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) and the University of Natal.⁵ Welch has suggested that the effect of this was that the philosophical approach to outcomes-based education (OBE) that underpins the NSE was rooted in the experience of certain institutions, requiring little identity change for their academics.⁶ For instance, a study of the uptake of the NSE by academics based at Wits and the University of Pretoria conducted during 1999–2000 revealed that the Wits programme and approach was already well aligned with the proposed NSE, while the University of Pretoria achieved only partial integration of roles and of theory and practice. In engaging with the NSE,

⁵ The NSE was developed by a team of academics under the leadership of Ren Parker of the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, and included John Gultig (University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg), Michael Cross (University of the Witwatersrand) and Sue Rees (Wits/JCE/National Professional Teachers Organisation of South Africa).

⁶ Personal communication, 2008.

academics at the majority of institutions were required to undertake epistemological and pedagogical shifts of the magnitude of Kuhn's 'paradigm shift' (Kuhn 1962).

Another critical feature that needs to be borne in mind relates to the implementation of the new NSF, which was gazetted in February 2000. A significant shift required of each teacher education provider was the introduction of the new BEd qualification, which had not been offered in the past. The schedule for the proposed implementation programme was extremely tight:

- Change the nomenclature of all existing qualifications by 30 June 2001.
- From the 2002/03 financial year, only programmes registered on the NQF and accredited by the HEQC could be eligible for DoE subsidy funding.
- Existing qualifications accredited by COTEP and HEDCOM and provisionally registered by SAQA could be offered until 30 June 2003, and pipeline students would be able to complete a qualification begun before this time.

Essentially, teacher education institutions would be required to develop the new BEd programme within two years, for implementation in the 2002 academic year. The result was a tension between complying rapidly with administrative requirements on the one hand, and developing quality integrated programmes in line with a new (foreign) paradigm on the other hand.

Rearticulation simultaneous with college incorporation

Simultaneously, a number of universities were mandated to incorporate colleges of education. Sayed (2004: 256) provides a useful interpretation of the shift of teacher education to the higher education sector that goes beyond the common argument that it was solely motivated by cost-saving considerations, arguing that it

also signals a belief that what is required in teacher education in South Africa is a strong focus on 'subject/learning area content knowledge' and a research culture which universities rather than colleges are seen to provide. It can also be construed as an attempt to inject into the university sector a longer-term commitment to teacher provision, rather than the conventional one-year diploma.

One result of the incorporation at macro-level was a new relationship between the providers of teacher education and the departments of education, and a split of responsibility for IPET and continuing professional teacher development (CPTD) programmes. The new dispensation provided that provincial departments were to be responsible for managing and funding CPTD programmes and skills-planning processes. The national department would assume responsibility for IPET in terms of the structure and quality assurance of programmes and qualifications, and hence could plan the supply and demand of future teachers (Hindle 2003). The decentralisation and recentralisation of control over parts of the system, as it will become clear in the case studies, had many unintended consequences at the micro-level in terms of potentially contradictory priorities set by individual faculties or schools.

We have seen how there were two main trajectories of college incorporation that impacted on curriculum processes at the micro-level (Kruss 2008). In the first, colleges essentially ceased to operate, their staff were moved to provincial education departments, their resources and infrastructure were reallocated, and their students became 'pipeline' students at the university with government funding for a period of three years. At the point when urgent attention was required to develop the new BEd

programmes, these university faculties and schools were diverted to focus on short term arrangements for pipeline students.

In the second trajectory, colleges were incorporated in a form of 'protected enclosure' in the university, with the retention of staff and valuable property. Here the impact on curriculum became complex. The programmes of some colleges provided the core for developing the new BEd qualification in line with the NSE, allowing faculties and schools to expand into new niches of provision. Considerable attention was required to put in place new management and administrative structures, and the personal and professional stress for individual academics was high. At the same time, future funding for initial teacher education was contingent on the development of the new four-year BEd programme, increasing the pressure.

A degree of recirculation in line with the NSE occurred in this period. It is perhaps not surprising that the evidence suggests that recirculation primarily consisted of repackaging existing programmes to comply formally with the nomenclature and structure of the new qualifications. In a few cases, recirculation consisted of processes to align the curricula of college lecturers with that of the university or technikon. This is as opposed to substantial academically driven engagement with the creative challenges of the NSE, which required a new conceptual framework – namely, a new commitment to a 'competence-based' way of thinking from most teacher educators.

In the context of the most substantial change to the teacher education systemic landscape since 1910, the requirement for individual institutions and academics to redevelop qualifications was greater than could be addressed in the short period given for formal compliance with the NSE. Most universities offered a one-year PGCE qualification, which was their only starting point for developing a new four-year qualification. And most colleges, which for decades had been under provincial and racialised departmental control, had little autonomy over curriculum. There was strong direct departmental control over curriculum development and assessment, leading to perceptions that colleges were 'glorified high schools'. Drawing on interviews with teachers, Soudien (2003: 278) has vividly described college lecturers' lack of autonomy over what they taught:

In the white college...lecturers seldom ventured beyond the textbook, which was invariably written by an apologist for the apartheid system. When they did, they courted trouble and found themselves out of a job. A similar tyranny reigned in the homeland college, where lecturers who refused to conform were dismissed from their posts.

At most of the universities, the existing curricula of most colleges provided little basis for developing new programmes characterised by reflective practice and foundational competence, but some colleges were able to bring critical expertise to bear.

For teacher education, the key shift in this period was the decentralisation of control and responsibility over curricula to the university, and the challenge to develop curricula in terms of a theoretical and epistemological approach that was entirely new to most teacher educators.

Refining implementation in a shifting landscape: 2003–2005

In the third period, national processes to understand the constraints on implementation of new teacher education policy were initiated, but were complicated by the review of the basic qualifications structure and by large-scale institutional mergers across the higher education system.

New forms of regulation to enhance implementation

While there is decentralisation of direct responsibility for curriculum development to the university level, 'state steering' now takes the indirect form of setting regulatory frameworks and quality assurance. Regulation and decision-making for teacher education has to be aligned and coordinated between multiple statutory bodies: the national and provincial education departments, the CHE, SAQA, the South African Council on Educators, the Education Labour Relations Council, and the Education, Training and Development Practitioner (ETDP) Sectoral Education and Training Authority (SETA). Effective implementation of new curriculum frameworks depended on alignment between these multiple institutions with varying powers or different levels. After a short period, Parker (2003: 12) argued that 'the dispersion of responsibilities and division of authority has produced a decision-making gridlock exacerbated by a general lack of human resource capacity in the system'.

To address this gridlock, a number of initiatives were instituted from 2003. Amid much contestation and heated debate, and given the stark evidence of a lack of transformation across the schooling system, a review of C2005 was undertaken to identify strategies for strengthening implementation (DoE 2000c, 2001a). A review of the NQF was initiated in 2001 in response to contestation around the integration of education and training, and in particular the integration of higher education into the NQF. A consultative document was released in 2003, with proposals around standards and qualifications, quality assurance, governance and the architecture for implementation (DoE & DoL 2003). The general thrust of these reviews was to identify ways to simplify, streamline and enhance effective implementation and clarify the responsibilities and roles of the multiple regulatory agencies involved.

A similar review of the national teacher education framework was initiated in the form of the Ministerial Committee on Teacher Education (MCTE), for two years from 2003. As the MCTE (DoE 2005: 2) explained, the purpose was not to replace the newly developed policies, but to identify barriers and develop an 'overarching framework that will enable us to use the policies already in place to develop a coherent teacher education system and to focus sharply on the decisive role of teacher education in the transformation of education'.

The MCTE presented its final report to the minister of education in June 2005. The major recommendation was to distinguish between three complementary subsystems in teacher education: IPET, CPTD and support systems for these. The argument was that the IPET system was not sufficiently funded and that it was highly contested. Funding was seen as a major constraint:

Many HEIs [higher education institutions] are now organised in terms of 'cost centres' required to justify their continued existence in terms of income and expenditure. In this climate, HEIs and Faculties of Education have a tendency to prioritise higher subsidy earning programmes, and IPET programmes tend to get sidelined. (DoE 2005: 20)

The CPTD programme did not yet exist as a system; nor were support systems coordinated or sufficiently focused. The recommendations of the MCTE proposed to improve these subsystems and contribute to a coherent and comprehensive system of teacher education.

Departmental response was slow and very delayed, partly because adoption of the MCTE recommendations was interconnected with decisions on the proposed new Higher Education Qualifications Framework (HEQF) (DoE 2004), which in turn depended on the response to the review to improve the implementation of the NQP. Draft responses were circulated for comment (DoE & DoL 2003; DoE 2004, 2006), but final frameworks were to be gazetted only during 2007 (Ministers of Education and Labour 2007). A further reason for the delay was the lack of senior leadership in teacher education in the DoE.

Policy vacuum: a constraint on mergers

The national imperative to identify ways to implement national policy more effectively impacted on universities that were undergoing externally mandated mergers and incorporations from 2003 to 2005.

The 2006 case studies revealed a number of trajectories and patterns of higher education merger (Kruss 2008). In some cases, mergers took a simple form, in that they were totally complementary or involved the partial incorporation of specific campuses. Other mergers were complex, involving multiple partners in successive waves of restructuring. Universities undergoing complex mergers varied in the extent to which one or more parties dominated in a particular merger, leading to differing degrees of synergy and contestation – in general, and around curriculum. The impact of institutional restructuring on curriculum processes was potentially very strong in some universities, but impacted on all in diverse ways.

The challenges of developing a new academic programme structure in merged institutions was the first focus, in order to align and consolidate the programmes of each party to the merger (DoE 2003; for case studies of the process, see Erasmus 2005; Mosia 2005; Naidoo 2005; Prinsloo 2005; Woodward 2005). For teacher education faculties and schools specifically, there was considerable duplication and overlap of programmes and qualifications offered, which required extensive curriculum alignment and restructuring.

The policy vacuum in effect acted as a constraint on teacher education providers at university level. Even where there was willingness to restructure, there was reluctance to proceed to design new programmes until the publication of the new National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development (NPFTED). Such delays in national teacher education processes at the macro-level impacted negatively on institutional mediation of curriculum change.

Facing the challenges: 2006–present

Since 2006, once governance and management structures were more firmly in place in the new universities, attention began to shift to alignment of programmes and the development of new curricula in general. For teacher education, specific dedicated initiatives began to fill the policy vacuum during 2006 and 2007. The first was the HEQC's initiation of a national review of teacher education programmes, and the second was the eventual publication of the new NPFTED.

Quality-assurance processes driving rearticulation

There is evidence to suggest that new regulatory processes of higher education quality assurance have been a spur to creating a common curriculum in some newly merged institutions.

In 2004, amid similar concerns that drove the MCTE, the HEQC decided to initiate a national review of the quality of professional and academic programmes in education. The decision was initially motivated by concerns about teacher education in relation to its influence on the quality of schooling (HEQC 2004a: 3). Later briefing documents have included factors relating more specifically to higher education issues – in particular, recognition of the potential implications of higher education mergers and college incorporations into universities for quality, and concerns about the development of a new generation of education researchers through quality postgraduate programmes (HEQC 2004b, 2005, 2007).

Over a period of three years in succession, selected Master of Education (MEd), BEd, PGCE and Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) programmes at every public and private provider of teacher education were reviewed. In a reflection on the process, HEQC employees Menon and Harley (2007: 9) conclude that 'the picture was of units offering programmes being subject to, on the one hand, new higher education policy with new forms of regulation and accountability, and, on the other, policy vacuum'. Macro- and meso-management and reporting policies, rather than academic rationales, appeared to be driving curriculum development.

We have stressed the demands on universities to face curriculum policy challenges on a shifting institutional foundation, and the five case studies in this monograph will reiterate the specifics of such dynamics. The case studies demonstrate starkly the ways in which quality-assurance processes began to drive rearticulation at some but not all universities. Negative evaluation served as a spur for more intense collaboration. By 2007, there was a great deal of stress and anxiety involved in preparation for the review of the BEd, PGCE and ACE programmes. The unintended consequence in some cases was diversion of attention to the preparation of review documentation, rather than a focus on the substantive opportunities for curriculum development.

A(nother) new qualifications structure

The NPFTED reiterated the core conception of the NSE, stating that 'the notion of "applied and integrated competence", associated with the seven roles for teachers of the *Norms and Standards for Educators* (2000), provides the basis for designing new or revised teacher education programmes' (DoE 2007c: 13).

At the time of the case study research, there was still a great deal of flux and uncertainty in the national qualifications structure for teacher education. The NPFTED was gazetted in tandem with the HEQF in late 2007 (DoE, SAQA & CHE 2007). The most significant feature of the HEQF is that it 'stretches' the NQF levels for higher education, from levels 5 to 10, as opposed to 8 (DoE 2007b). All new qualifications will need to be aligned to the HEQF from 2009. The NPFTED (DoE 2007c) suggested that in line with the 'nomenclature in the forthcoming HEQF', in future there will be two pathways to prepare new teachers:

- a 480-credit BEd degree, which includes the equivalent of one year of supervised teaching practice, at level 7 on NQF (currently at level 6);

- an appropriate 360-credit Bachelor's Degree, followed by a 120 credit Advanced Diploma in Education (which will replace the PGCE, which replaced the Higher Diploma in Education (HDE)).

In an echo of the complex alignment between the NSE (1996) and the NQF, once again, with the HEQC and NPFTED now in place, the DoE will revise the NSE (2000) and the criteria for qualifications to bring them in alignment with the shifts.

Of note were indications in the NPFTED that the teacher professional qualifications (ACE and the National Professional Diploma in Education (NPDE)) under provincial control may be phased out and regulated more firmly. These programmes have grown rapidly in contrast to a decline in enrolments in initial teacher education, and there has been debate about the ideal balance of emphasis on IPET and CPTD within a faculty or school. Such a shift may have implications for the existing prioritisation of IPET and CPTD programmes within an institution, and for the relations between a faculty and the university management, over the next few years.

There is once again demand on teacher educators to interpret the new criteria for qualifications and to realign their programmes. The potential and space for substantive, academically driven curriculum design may once again be diverted to formal compliance with a new qualifications structure, before authentic engagement may begin.

Teaching practice increasingly at the heart of integrative practice

The NSE (2000) clearly proposed that teaching practice was to be at the heart of the integrative core of the IPET programme. A degree of school-based support was mandated, leaving space for institutions to determine the precise form of teaching practice equivalent to one year. There was scope to decide what blocks of time should be spent in schools, the role of supervisors or mentors, integration between teaching practice and other courses, and so on. In short, no specifics were stated and there was insufficient clarity for practical implementation.

A process of development and refinement oriented towards more school-based experience and assessment criteria is evident through the HEQC and the NPFTED. The HEQC adopted minimum standards and criteria as agreed in a stakeholder-defined process, and argued that 'professional competence' should be assessed in 'authentic settings' and that there should be procedures for teachers to act as co-assessors. The NPFTED proposed a range of possible modes of teaching experience, with the general agreement that it should account for 120 credits of the BEd. Structured mentorship programmes are to be encouraged but with the proviso that there is suitable supervision and appropriate placements. These policy statements have sought to tighten requirements for practical implementation in line with the philosophy articulated in the NSE, and the cases will reveal diverse institutional mediations.

A changing curriculum landscape

The NSE (2000) and the NPFTED (2007) provisions thus define the broad qualifications and curriculum policy parameters within which institutions and academics now create and negotiate new programmes and curricula.

In concluding this section, it is useful to summarise the main drivers and features of curriculum change in each of the four periods. Table 2.1 attempts to do this in a visually simple manner, distinguishing between general higher education and specific IPET dynamics of curriculum change. The apparent simplicity is misleading, as none of these processes have proceeded automatically, nor do they follow one another in logical succession. Nor is the process the same at any two universities, as the analysis will show. One university may have initiated recirculation processes in response to higher education debates, and then responded again in later periods to engage with the educational imperatives of the NSE. Another university may only have initiated significant curriculum development processes following the HEQC review. The periodisation thus provides a macro-level framework for analysing the experience of each university, as their managers, leaders and academics mediate, respond to and engage with the imperatives of change in complex ways.

Table 2.1 Curriculum restructuring in teacher education, 1994–2007

| Period | Higher education in general | IPET specifically |
|---|---|--|
| 1. Debating new higher education curriculum policy: 1994–1999 | Curriculum restructuring driven by national mediations of global trends – NQF compliance and programme-based funding. Programme and curriculum change within institutions may increasingly be driven by changing funding regimes and pressures (efficiency and financial viability concerns). | Curriculum change in response to introduction of OBE and C2005 at school level. |
| 2. A new IPET policy framework: 2000–2003* | | Curriculum restructuring driven by the NSE (1995 and 2000) and the Revised National Curriculum Statement for schools (2002). Seven roles for educators increasingly <i>become</i> the curriculum. Overlaid with dynamics resulting from college incorporation, where the form of incorporation was other than ‘institutional cessation’. |
| 3. Refining implementation in a shifting landscape: 2003–2005 | Curriculum ‘alignment’ driven by imperatives of higher education institutional merger. Programme and curriculum change within new institutions driven by funding pressures. Emphasis on quality assurance: HEEQC reviews. | MCTE. ‘Policy vacuum’ on framework for teacher education is a constraint. |
| 4. Facing the challenges: 2006–present | Renewed focus on curriculum restructuring driven by imperatives of institutional merger, once fundamentals of new university are more firmly in place. | Curriculum development driven by HEEQC National Review (given outcomes of 2005 MED review). Qualifications revision and curriculum development facilitated by NPFTEd (2007) and the HEQF (2007). |

A highly contested process at the meso- and micro-levels

A conception of curriculum change driven at multiple layers simultaneously can be helpful in analysing the experience of individual universities and academics at the meso- and micro-levels. A single university may have initiated curriculum response in any one of these periods, or in multiple combinations of these periods, primarily in response to higher education or IPEI imperatives. Or, some institutions may have initiated their own processes of rearticulation that are undermined by subsequent demands for compliance with national directives and regulatory frameworks.

In this section we briefly consider some of the common pressures shaping curriculum processes at the meso-level of institutional dynamics and at the micro-level of faculty or school dynamics.

Financial pressures at the meso-level

At the meso-level, education faculties and schools face organisational challenges arising primarily from the fact that the Classification of Education Subject Matter (CESM) category of education is subsidised in the lowest funding group. As a result, the shift to new decentralised management and financial models within universities mean that education is often at an institutional disadvantage, even where there might be high numbers of students enrolled.

There have been many appeals that the DoE subsidy funding allocation does not recognise the specific demands of quality professional education for distinct school phases and subjects, following the incorporation of teacher education within the higher education sector. The decision of the DoE was to retain the status quo until 2007/08, when the process of phasing in a new funding framework (initiated in 2004/05) would be complete (Ministry of Education 2006).

The 2006 case studies illustrated the range of institutional responses to the funding pressures, from a focus on increasing postgraduate enrolments which attract a higher level of subsidy, to a focus on attracting larger numbers of students to CPTD programmes offered on satellite campuses or on a semi-distance basis. All of these have the unintended consequence of detracting resources and focus from initial teacher education, particularly from the need for research-led, substantive rearticulation in alignment with new qualification and policy frameworks (Kruis 2008).

Academic contestation at the micro-level

At the micro-level, curriculum restructuring within faculties and schools is by definition a highly contested process. Morrow (2003), for instance, stresses how difficult it is to change curriculum – a project ‘likely to arouse conflict, passion, anxiety and resistance’. He offers a number of reasons why this is so:

Any current curriculum embodies a set of intellectual habits and routines which have become comfortable for those who teach the curriculum. At a deeper psychological level, committed teachers’ self-images and professional identities and their fundamental convictions about the values and standards of academic practice, are likely to be deeply enmeshed *(sic)* with the curriculum they teach. To ask them to change the curriculum, in effect, is to ask them to develop a new professional identity and probably also, in their eyes, to fatally compromise their standards, and to abandon

their ardently acquired understandings of the disciplines they teach and the significance of their academic practice. (2003: 4)

At departmental level, the demands of curriculum restructuring per se, internally driven and shaped by global and national policy processes, are immense in the context of relatively stable institutions. The demands are even greater if curriculum restructuring is taking place on unstable organisational foundations in institutions newly emerged from complex, externally mandated restructuring. And the demands are greater still where there is a regulatory expectation of compliance with national frameworks but a substantive policy vacuum.

In this study, researchers stress the inherent difficulties in changing disciplinary identities and academic cultures, but the findings add a further dimension in that academics may bring with them, and continue to cling to, organisational and institutional cultures of their 'home' institution. Academics in IPET programmes in some of the cases may be challenged to rearticulate in an institutional context with which they themselves are not familiar and which is not organisationally stable. Or it may be that their new location offers them opportunities and positive academic challenges that were not possible in previous institutional locations. Or groups of academics with vastly different epistemologies, disciplinary backgrounds and pedagogies may be challenged to work together to claim the space to design new programmes.

There is a need to explain what happens in the current South African context when academics bring with them not only their own disciplinary allegiances and cultural characteristics but also different institutional identities and organisational and academic cultures. The past institutional identities may sustain contesting points of view and act as further impediments to curriculum restructuring at the micro-level. On the other hand, it may well be that curriculum restructuring is actually facilitated by merger in that the imperatives for restructuring are made explicit and old academic homes are destabilised. Moreover, we cannot assume that academics bring with them from their former institutional locations competing or contradictory values, assumptions and beliefs that are cast in stone and continue to determine their actions over time, as new institutional and academic cultures begin to emerge. Hence, it is important to examine the ways in which a faculty or school has put in place leadership, processes or mechanisms to manage integration and to facilitate synergy in general, and around curriculum specifically.

In the five chapters that follow, we attempt to illuminate such complex and 'messy' trends and dynamics of mediation at the micro-level of BEd and PGCE programmes in the five education faculties and schools. In the final chapter, we attempt a comparative aggregation to illuminate trends across the teacher education system as a whole.